

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BAGHDA 01226 140928Z
ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 IO-13 ACDA-12 DOE-15 SOE-02 EB-08
OES-07 /144 W
-----049858 150233Z /12

R 131030Z JUN 78
FM USINT BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6322
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMMAN 784
AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L BAGHDAD 1226

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PROP, MASS, IZ, US
SUBJ: KURDS, COMMUNISTS AND ALLIES OF U.S. ALL LOOK
THREATENING WHEN VIEWED FROM BAGHDAD

REF (A) BAGHDAD 1195 (NOTAL) (B) BAGHDAD 993 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: IRAQI NEWSPAPER CHARGES USG AND ISRAEL
SUPPORTED MUSTAFA BARZANI AGAINST IRAQ AND ARMS SAUDI
ARABIA AGAINST SOVIET THREAT. PRIVATELY, EDITOR SUGGESTS
COMMUNISTS BACKING KURDS. END SUMMARY.

2. BAATH PARTY BACKED WEEKLY NEWSPAPER AL-RAASID
DEVOTES MOST OF FRONT PAGE OF ITS JUNE 10 ISSUE TO REHASH OF
OLD CHARGES ABOUT CIA INVOLVEMENT IN KURDISH OPPOSITION
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TO IRAQI REGIME. REPORTAGE IS BASED UPON ARTICLES IN
WESTERN PRESS. AL-RAASID CHARGES THAT USG AND ISRAEL
AIMED AT DOMINATING KIRKUK OIL FIELDS. WHEREAS MOST
OF ARTICLE DEALT WITH EVENTS LONG PAST, WRITER CONCLUDED
WITH CLAIM THAT MUSTAFA BARZANI NOW LIVES IN SECRET
HIDEOUT NEAR WASHINGTON WHERE HE RECEIVES A PENSION
FROM THE CIA. PRESENCE OF BARZAIN I U.S. HAS NOT

PREVIOUSLY BEEN MENTIONED BY IRAQI MEDIA.

3. BALANCE OF FRONT PAGE DEVOTED TO EXPLANATION OF F-15 SALE TO SAUDI ARABIA IN TERMS OF AMERICAN STRATEGIC CONCERN FOR SAUDI OILFIELDS IN VIEW OF GROWTH OF SOVIET POWER IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND ETHIOPIA. ALTHOUGH IN GENERAL TERMS, ARTICLE CONTAINED FIRST MENTION BY IRAQI MEDIA OF SOVIET PRESENCE IN ETHIOPIA AND ALSO MADE FIRST CLEAR REFERENCE TO SUGGESTION THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS OBTAINING AIRCRAFT TO CHECK POSSIBLE THREAT FROM ITS ARAB NEIGHBORS, IRAQ AND THE PDY.

4. POLOFF HAD OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK WITH AL-RAASID PUBLISHER AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF MUSTAFA AL-FUKAYKI AT SOCIAL OCCASION JUNE 11. IN RELAXED CONVERSATION RUKAYKI REMINDED POLOFF THAT HIS PAPER HAD PUBLISHED LENGTHY CRITIQUE OF COMMUNIST PARTY POLITICAL REPORT (REF B) WHICH SIGNED BEGINNING OF CURRENT TENSION IN IRAQI-SOVIET RELATIONS. FUKAYKI SAID THAT SINCE HIS NEWSPAPER WAS NOT OFFICIAL ORGAN OF EITHER IRAQI GOVERNMENT OR BAATH PARTY HE WAS FREE TO TAKE ON FOES OF IRAQI REVOLUTION WITHOUT IMPLYING ANY OFFICIAL POLICY. HE QUICKLY ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT HE WAS VERY AWARE OF POLICY GUIDELINES AND STAYED WITHIN THEM (FUKAYKI WAS MISLEADING ON THIS POINT. HIS NEWSPAPER IS PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNMENT PRINTING HOUSE, AND MOST CONFIDENTIAL

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OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT AL-RAASID'S SLASHING ATTACK ON LOCAL COMMUNIST PARTY WAS WRITTEN BY NATIONAL COMMAND MEMBER TA RIQ AZAZ.)

5. FUKAYKI THEN SURPRISED POLOFF BY ASKING WHETHER HE DID NOT THINK THERE WAS SOME KIND OF LINK BETWEEN CURRENT PROBLEMS OF IRAQI COMMUNISTS AND DISSIDENCE IN KURDISH AREAS. POLOFF REPLIED THAT IT WOULD BE MOST UNWISE FOR SOVIET UNION TO SUPPORT OPPONENTS OF THE PRESENT IRAQI GOVERNMENT. HE ADDED THAT MUSTAFA BARZANI WAS AN OLD MAN WHO WAS IN THE U.S. FOR MEDICAL CARE. FUKAYKI AGREED THAT IN ANY EVENT BARZANI'S SUPPORTERS NOW PLAYED SECONDARY ROLE WITHIN IRAQI TO THOSE OF JALAL TALABANI AND OFFERED HIS OWN OPINION THAT SOME LOCAL COMMUNISTS HAD JOINED KURDISH REBELS AFTER RECENT CRACKDOWN ON COMMUNISTS.

6. COMMENT: AL-RAASID SEEMS TO ENJOY GREATER RANGE FOR ITS REPORTAGE THAN OTHER NEWSPAPERS IN THIS INTENSELY-CONTROLLED MEDIA ENVIRONMENT. WE WOULD GUESS THAT ARTICLE ON KURDS, CONSISTING AS IT DID OF STALE MATERIAL FROM FOREIGN PRESS, WAS LESS OF AN ATTACK ON

USG THAN IT WAS AN ATTEMPT TO SHOW THAT AL-RAASID PLAYS
NO FAVORITES AMONG THE BIG POWERS. WE THINK AL-FUKAYKI
WILL CLEAR HIS MATERIAL VERY CAREFULLY BEFORE HE
WRITES ANYTHING ON CURRENT UNREST IN KURDISH AREAS.
(IN THIS CONNECTION, INFO MINISTER'S INTERVIEW WITH
KUWAIT PAPER (REF B) WAS NEVER DISSEMINATED HERE BEYOND
IRAQ NEWS AGENCY BULLETIN.) WE ARE NONETHELESS INTRIGUED
THAT PROMINENT IRAQI NEWSMAN WOULD SUGGEST, EVEN PRIVATELY,
THAT IRAQI COMMUNISTS ARE FIGHTING WITH KURDS,
ALTHOUGH THAT RUMOR IS CURRENT AMONG DIPLOMATIC
CORPS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: KURDS, PROPAGANDA, COMMUNISTS, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS, POLITICAL SITUATION, MILITARY SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BAGHDA01226
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780249-0556
Format: TEL
From: BAGHDAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780667/aaaacfss.tel
Line Count: 127
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: f033d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 BAGHDAD 1195, 78 BAGHDAD 993
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 feb 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2381622
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KURDS, COMMUNISTS AND ALLIES OF U.S. ALL LOOK THREATENING WHEN VIEWED FROM BAGHDAD
TAGS: PINS, PROP, MASS, IZ, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/f033d18a-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014